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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2633

October 22, 1993

**NAFTA** -- Full implementation with Mexico of the North American Free Trade Agreement will result in United States agricultural exports to Mexico totaling \$10 billion, and generate 56,000 new jobs in the U.S. Keith Collins, acting USDA assistant secretary for Economics, says this compares to the \$3.8 billion in agricultural products to Mexico last year that accounted for 111,000 U.S. jobs. Collins says cattle exports will experience the largest boost under NAFTA with an \$880 million increase, followed by pork at \$440 million, corn at \$280 million, soybeans at \$220 million, beef and dairy products each at \$140 million, fruits at \$125 million, poultry at \$50 million, and vegetables and wheat with a projected increase of \$40 million each. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

**NUTRITION & SCHOOL MEALS** -- A USDA hearing conducted in Atlanta, GA, Oct. 13, examined the nutritional quality of school lunch programs that are served to 25 million students nationwide. During the hearing, chaired by Ellen Haas, assistant secretary for Food and Consumer Services, testimony was offered on the health consequences of children's dietary practices, and on opportunities and barriers to improving the nutritional quality of school meals. "All of our efforts to provide more nutritious school meals and improve nutrition education depend on a network of partnerships that connect schools, their communities, their states, and the federal government," Hass said. Future hearings on Nutrition Objectives for School Meals are scheduled for Los Angeles, CA, Oct. 27; Flint, MI, Nov. 12; and Washington, D.C., Dec. 7. **Contact: Laura Trivers (703) 305-2093.**

**PESTICIDE DATA PROGRAM** -- USDA is conducting a survey of 8,000 fruit growers in nine states to gather information about the use of pesticides and commercial fertilizers. The survey will cover about 90 percent of the nation's fruit production and acreage, and is designed to improve the reliability of information about pesticide use on food crops. The program helps government agencies and policymakers address public concerns about agricultural chemical use. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

**SOYBEAN REFERENDUM** -- Soybean producers will vote February 9, 1994 on whether to continue the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Program. Registration and voting will take place at Cooperative Extension Service county offices. Absentee ballots will be available from December 1 through January 21. For the program to continue a simple majority of those voting must favor it. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

**COTTON** -- Cotton crop conditions deteriorated as harvesting got underway. By mid-October slightly less than half the crop, 47 percent, was rated good or excellent. Overall, yields are expected to average 614 pounds per harvested acre, 85 pounds below last year. Cotton mill use continues strong. On a daily basis, consumption is averaging about 42,000 bales, the highest rate since the 1950/51 season. The August daily rate is the highest in over 50 years. **Contact: Bob Skinner (202) 219-0840.**

**COARSE GRAINS** -- United States production of coarse grains in 1993/94 is projected at 205 million tons, down 8 million from last year. In second place are the nations of the former Soviet Union at 98 million tons, up 5 percent. The European Community is third at 83 million tons, down 8 percent from last year. **Contact: Peter Riley (202) 219-0824.**

**RICE** -- The world's leading producer of rice in 1993/94 is expected to be India, at 73 million tons, up one percent from last year. Thailand is second at 13 million tons, up 2 percent. Japan is third at 7 million tons, down 22 percent from last year. Japan is forecast to become the world's largest importer of rice in 1994. The United States is fourth at 5 million tons, down 8 percent from a year ago. **Contact: Janet Livezey (202) 720-0840.**

**CORN AND SOYBEANS DOWN** -- U.S. corn production this year is forecast at 6.9 billion bushels, down 27 percent from last year. An average yield of 110 bushels per acre is expected, down 21 bushels from the record high set last year. Acreage for harvest declined 800,000 acres last month due to destruction to qualify for government programs. Soybean production should total 1.8 billion bushels, 14 percent below last year. Average yield is forecast at 33.7 bushels per acre. **Contact: Dan Kerestes (202) 720-9526.**

**LEANER MEAT** -- An effective method of obtaining lean beef animals is to use bulls produced by crossing traditional breeds with so-called "double-muscled" breeds that have larger muscles and little fat. But not all bull calves from these unions inherit traits for lean meat. To identify those that do, USDA's Agricultural Research Service has developed a blood test that measures levels of creatine, a protein produced by muscles. Tests showed that calves that inherited the leaner meat traits had higher levels of creatine. The test may help beef producers put leaner meat on our tables. **Contact: Morse Solomon (301) 504-8400.**

**FARM MACHINERY PURCHASES** -- Capital investment in farm machinery increased during the first 8 months of this year. Farm tractor purchases were up 10 percent and combines were up 15 percent compared to 1992. Factors behind the increases were higher farm income in 1992, up 20 percent due to larger grain crops, lower interest rates, and lower farm debt. But nationally capital depletion is continuing, with real depreciation exceeding real capital expenditure every year since 1980. **Contact: Stan Daberkow (202) 219-0456.**

**THE ASIAN OPPORTUNITY** -- Asia is the largest regional market for U.S. farm exports, accounting for 40 percent of U.S. exported farm products. Stronger demand offers potential for further growth. Asia has a projected net import demand for wheat, coarse grain, soybeans, cotton and meats, especially in the rapidly developing southern sections of the region. Developments in China will be the key to future import growth. Market-oriented reforms under GATT are expected to ease access to the protected East Asian markets. Challenges for U.S. exporters include boosting low U.S. market shares in China and Southeastern Asia, and coping with unstable import demands. **Contact: Rip Landes (202) 219-0705.**

**FOOD COSTS** -- Costs that occur beyond the farm gate, such as labor, packaging, transportation and energy, are influenced more by the general economy than are farm commodities. With slow economic growth keeping inflation low, retail price increases reflecting processing and distribution costs have been small. Last year those costs rose at the lowest rate in 20 years and are expected to remain small at the close of 1993. With an expected growth in the economy, food prices in 1994 will more fully reflect increased consumer demand. **Ralph Parlett (202) 219-0870.**

## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1898** -- Some of the toughest issues confronting the Clinton administration are in rural America. **Maria Bynum** focuses on rural America's challenges and changes. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1380** -- Healthy eating on the downslide?; A rural MBA; Federal empowerment program progressing; investing in tomorrow's leaders; conquering world hunger. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1890** -- USDA News Highlights; the outlook for 1994 midwest planting; farm machinery exports; rhizomania update; corn based foam helps seedlings. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1643** -- Stored grain computer model; persistent parasites; biocontrol irrigation; brighteners boost virus; protecting the troops. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Thursday, October 28, world tobacco situation; Friday, October 29, ag prices, catfish production; Monday, November 1, horticultural exports; Tuesday, November 2, weekly weather and crop update, cotton and wool update; Wednesday, November 3, world food needs assessment. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.**  
*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Patrick O'Leary reports on NAFTA and U.S. jobs, and on the origins of the Jack O'Lantern; Lynn Wyvill reports about mulch mats.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA chief economist Keith Collins on the economic benefits of NAFTA; USDA analyst Stan Daberkow on agricultural inputs; USDA meteorologist Mark Brusberg with a weather and crop update.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on fungi in forest research; DeBoria Janifer reports on "Ag in the Classroom;" and Pat O'Leary reports in a five part series on prescription farming.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**IT IS MORE ENCOURAGING...**than a month ago, says **Vicki Eilers** (WTAD, Quincy, IL). Two local elevators are taking grain again following a shutdown from July 13 to September 27 due to flood conditions. Dry weather has helped attitudes and getting in the crops. Soybean yields are better than expected. However, some fields may not be open to farming next year. The Army Corps of Engineers may not repair the levees. Producers want the option to farm, but those living in the lowlands are moving their homes to higher ground.

**LIVE COVERAGE...**of the 56th annual Western Junior Livestock Show was provided to listeners by **Verne Sheppard** (KTOQ, Rapid City, SD). Verne says the agriculture committee of the Chamber of Commerce provided pancake breakfasts for the 600 kids who were showing 1100 cattle and sheep.

**NEW VOICE...**for agriculture at WSDR, Sterling, IL is **Amy Bugg** replacing **Brent Cords** who returns to regular programming.

## ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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**GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY...**for the World Dairy Center in Madison, WI was covered by **Lesley Leonard** (Goetz Farm Radio Network, Marshfield, WI). Les says the complex will represent all aspects of agriculture in the state.

**TWO WEEKS...**of dry weather in October was the longest dry period since early this year, says **Craig Donnelly** (KLMJ, Hampton, IA). Bean and corn harvests promptly got underway. Yields and quality are lower than last year.

**PUMPKIN SUPPLY...**will be adequate for the holidays, says **Gary Kinnett** (WIAI, Danville, IL), the pack this year was fair. Outstanding soybean yields are reported in Indiana, up to 52 bushels per acre, 35-45 in Illinois. Corn quality is superb, with some yields up to 210 bushels reported. Seed corn companies in Gary's region tell him the quality and yields have been excellent, providing good supplies for next year.

**VIC POWELL**  
Electronic Media Services